

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

ANDREW T. HINCKLEY,)	
)	NO. CV-06-3067-JPH
Plaintiff,)	
)	ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT'S
v.)	MOTION TO STRIKE, DENYING
)	PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR
THURSTON COUNTY, et al.,)	SUMMARY JUDGMENT AND
)	GRANTING DEFENDANTS' MOTION
Defendants.)	FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT
)	

I. Procedural History

Plaintiff Andrew T. Hinckley ("Plaintiff") filed a civil rights action, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, on July 3, 2005. (See Ct. Rec. 29). An amended complaint was filed on November 15, 2005. (*Id.*) On June 14, 2006, United States District Judge Robert J. Bryan granted the summary judgment motion of Defendants Thurston County and Gary S. Edwards. (*Id.*) Defendants Thurston County and Gary S. Edwards, and all claims against them, were dismissed, and the action was transferred to this Court in July of 2006. (*Id.*) On August 10, 2007, the parties consented to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate Judge in this case. (Ct. Rec. 62). Both parties' filed summary judgment motions in February of 2008. (Ct. Rec. 73; Ct. Rec. 85). These motions are currently pending before the Court.

1 Plaintiff's amended complaint alleges that Defendants are
2 liable, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, for the deprivation of his
3 Eighth Amendment rights because Defendants failed "to provide a
4 safe environment and protection from antagonistic inmates." (Ct.
5 Rec. 29). Plaintiff only seeks summary judgment as to liability
6 on this claim (Ct. Rec. 73) and contests Defendants' motion for
7 summary judgement as to this claim only (Ct. Rec. 92).
8 Accordingly, Plaintiff's claim, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, that
9 Defendants are liable for the failure to protect is the only issue
10 remaining to be resolved in this case. (Ct. Rec. 73; Ct. Rec.
11 85). This final claim is the subject of both parties' summary
12 judgment motions. (Ct. Rec. 73; Ct. Rec. 85).

13 While Plaintiff's amended complaint alleges claims against
14 Sheriff Ken Irwin, a claim that Defendants were deliberately
15 indifferent to Plaintiff's medical needs, and claims under the
16 Washington State Constitution (See Ct. Rec. 29), Plaintiff does
17 not contest Defendants' motion for summary judgment on these
18 claims (Ct. Rec. 92 at 1). Plaintiff concedes that Defendants are
19 entitled to summary judgment on the claims as to Sheriff Irwin,
20 the claim of deliberate indifference to medical needs and the
21 claims under the Washington Constitution. (*Id.*) Accordingly,
22 Defendants' motion for summary judgment as to Plaintiff's claims
23 against Sheriff Ken Irwin, Plaintiff's claim as to deliberate
24 indifference to medical needs and Plaintiff's claims under the
25 Washington State Constitution is **GRANTED** and the claims are
26 dismissed with prejudice.

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1 II. Defendants' Motion to Strike

2 On February 19, 2008, in response to Plaintiff's motion for
3 summary judgment (Ct. Rec. 73), Defendants filed a motion to
4 strike evidentiary submissions referred to in Plaintiff's motion
5 for summary judgment. (Ct. Rec. 89).

6 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(f) provides, in pertinent
7 part, that "[u]pon motion . . . or upon the court's own initiative
8 at any time, the court may order stricken from any pleading any
9 insufficient defense or any redundant, immaterial, impertinent, or
10 scandalous matter." Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(f).

11 Defendants contend that deposition excerpts submitted by
12 Plaintiff were not attached to an appropriate authenticating
13 affidavit and that unauthenticated documents cannot be considered
14 on a motion for summary judgment. (Ct. Rec. 89 at 2-3). However,
15 on February 26, 2008, Plaintiff filed a supplemental declaration
16 (Ct. Rec. 94), which cured the prior oversight. The deposition
17 excerpts are now adequately authenticated.

18 Defendants also contend that documents attached to the
19 declaration of Plaintiff's counsel and, specifically, Plaintiff's
20 exhibit 28 do not comply with Fed. R. Civ. P. 56 and the Federal
21 Rules of Evidence. (Ct. Rec. 89 at 3-4). Plaintiff responds that
22 the documents attached as exhibits to the declaration were
23 provided by Defendants in discovery and, thus, are authenticated
24 as documents provided by a party-opponent in response to discovery
25 requests. (Ct. Rec. 93 at 2); *Orr v. Bank of America*, 285 F.3d
26 764, 777 n. 20 (9th Cir. 2002) (documents produced by a party in
27 discovery were deemed authentic when offered by the party-
28 opponent). Exhibit 28 is a copy of an inmate grievance form that

1 Plaintiff submitted while incarcerated. At this stage of the
2 litigation process, and based on the foregoing, the Court denies
3 Defendants' motion to strike. In any event, considering the
4 Court's ultimate ruling herein (*see infra*), Defendants' are not
5 prejudiced by the Court's denial of their motion to strike.

6 III. Summary Judgment Standard

7 Summary judgment is appropriate when it is demonstrated that
8 there exists no genuine issue as to any material fact, and that
9 the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Fed.
10 R. Civ. P. 56(c). Under summary judgment practice, the moving
11 party

12 [A]lways bears the initial responsibility of informing the
13 district court of the basis for its motion, and identifying
14 those portions of "the pleadings, depositions, answers to
15 interrogatories, and admissions on file, together with the
16 affidavits, if any," which it believes demonstrate the
17 absence of a genuine issue of material fact.

18 *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986). "[W]here the
19 nonmoving party will bear the burden of proof at trial on a
20 dispositive issue, a summary judgment motion may properly be made
21 in reliance solely on the 'pleadings, depositions, answers to
22 interrogatories, and admissions on file.'" *Id.* Indeed, summary
23 judgment should be entered, after adequate time for discovery and
24 upon motion, against a party who fails to make a showing
25 sufficient to establish the existence of an element essential to
26 that party's case, and on which that party will bear the burden of
27 proof at trial. *Celotex Corp.*, 477 U.S. at 322. "[A] complete
28 failure of proof concerning an essential element of the nonmoving
party's case necessarily renders all other facts immaterial." *Id.*
In such a circumstance, summary judgment should be granted, "so
long as whatever is before the district court demonstrates that

1 the standard for entry of summary judgment, as set forth in Rule
2 56(c), is satisfied." *Id.* at 323.

3 If the moving party meets its initial responsibility, the
4 burden then shifts to the opposing party to establish that a
5 genuine issue as to any material fact actually does exist.
6 *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574,
7 586 (1986). In attempting to establish the existence of this
8 factual dispute, the opposing party may not rely upon the denials
9 of its pleadings, but is required to tender evidence of specific
10 facts in the form of affidavits, and/or admissible discovery
11 material, in support of its contention that the dispute exists.
12 Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(e); *Matsushita*, 475 U.S. at 586 n. 11. The
13 opposing party must demonstrate that the fact in contention is
14 material, i.e., a fact that might affect the outcome of the suit
15 under the governing law, *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S.
16 242, 248 (1986); *T.W. Elec. Serv., Inc. v. Pacific Elec.*
17 *Contractors Ass'n*, 809 F.2d 626, 630 (9th Cir. 1987), and that the
18 dispute is genuine, i.e., the evidence is such that a reasonable
19 jury could return a verdict for the nonmoving party, *Wool v.*
20 *Tandem Computers, Inc.*, 818 F.2d 1433, 1436 (9th Cir. 1987).

21 In the endeavor to establish the existence of a factual
22 dispute, the opposing party need not establish a material issue of
23 fact conclusively in its favor. It is sufficient that "the
24 claimed factual dispute be shown to require a jury or judge to
25 resolve the parties' differing versions of the truth at trial."
26 *T.W. Elec. Serv.*, 809 F.2d at 631. Thus, the "purpose of summary
27 judgment is to 'pierce the pleadings and to assess the proof in
28 order to see whether there is a genuine need for trial.'"

1 *Matsushita*, 475 U.S. at 587 (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(e)
2 advisory committee's note on 1963 amendments).

3 In resolving the summary judgment motion, the court examines
4 the pleadings, depositions, answers to interrogatories, and
5 admissions on file, together with the affidavits, if any. Fed. R.
6 Civ. P. 56(c). The evidence of the opposing party is to be
7 believed, *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 255, and all reasonable inferences
8 that may be drawn from the facts placed before the court must be
9 drawn in favor of the opposing party, *Matsushita*, 475 U.S. at 587
10 (citing *United States v. Diebold, Inc.*, 369 U.S. 654, 655 (1962)
11 (per curiam). Nevertheless, inferences are not drawn out of the
12 air, and it is the opposing party's obligation to produce a
13 factual predicate from which the inference may be drawn. *Richards*
14 *v. Nielsen Freight Lines*, 602 F. Supp. 1224, 1244-45 (E.D. Cal.
15 1985), *aff'd*, 810 F.2d 898, 902 (9th Cir. 1987).

16 Finally, to demonstrate a genuine issue, the opposing party
17 "must do more than simply show that there is some metaphysical
18 doubt as to the material facts. Where the record taken as a whole
19 could not lead a rational trier of fact to find for the nonmoving
20 party, there is no 'genuine issue for trial.'" *Matsushita*, 475
21 U.S. at 587 (citation omitted).

22 IV. Discussion

23 A. Factual Summary

24 The events at issue in the instant action occurred at the
25 Yakima County Department of Corrections in Yakima, Washington. In
26 December 2002, Plaintiff was convicted in Thurston County Superior
27 Court of Second Degree Assault and Hit and Run - Injury. Pursuant
28 to a contractual arrangement for inmate housing between Thurston

1 County and Yakima County, Plaintiff was transferred from the
2 Thurston County Jail to the Yakima County DOC on December 29,
3 2002. At some time between December 29, 2002, and February 9,
4 2003, Plaintiff was returned to Thurston County for a brief period
5 and then transferred back to Yakima County. Upon his transfer
6 back to Yakima County DOC, Plaintiff was assigned to a cell on the
7 north end of the fourth floor in the "G" unit ("4G"). On February
8 10, 2003, Plaintiff was removed from his cell on 4G by Corrections
9 Officer Curtis Santucci ("Officer Santucci") after Plaintiff
10 pressed an emergency button in his cell and requested reassignment
11 because other inmates in 4G had called him a "snitch." After
12 contacting the Classification Unit to advise him where to house
13 Plaintiff, Officer Santucci moved Plaintiff to the "B" unit on the
14 second floor ("2B").

15 Following an incident on February 18, 2003, Plaintiff was
16 moved to housing unit 4B, the Behavior Management Unit ("BMU"),
17 pending a disciplinary hearing. Due to continued disciplinary
18 problems, Plaintiff was confined in the BMU until March 12, 2003.
19 On March 12, 2003, Classification Corrections Officer Donald
20 Little ("Officer Little") discussed with Plaintiff where he could
21 be housed on the north end of the fourth floor. Plaintiff
22 informed Officer Little that he could not be placed in certain
23 units, 4F and 4H, on the north end of the fourth floor, but agreed
24 with placement in 4G. Plaintiff was assaulted by inmates shortly
25 after his placement in 4G and was thereafter transported to the
26 emergency room at Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital. Upon
27 Plaintiff's return to the Yakima County DOC on March 12, 2003,
28 Plaintiff was reassigned to 2B.

1 As a result of a disciplinary infraction on April 20, 2003,
2 Plaintiff was again placed in the BMU. On May 10, 2003, Plaintiff
3 was assaulted in the BMU by a different inmate and thereafter
4 transported to the emergency room at the Yakima Valley Memorial
5 Hospital. After returning to the Yakima County DOC on May 11,
6 2003, Plaintiff did not experience any other assaults for the
7 remainder of his incarceration which ended on May 29, 2003.

8 B. Legal Standard

9 The Civil Rights Act under which this action was filed
10 provides:

11 Every person who, under color of [state law] . . . subjects,
12 or causes to be subjected, any citizen of the United States.
13 . . . to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or
14 immunities secured by the Constitution . . . shall be liable
15 to the party injured in an action at law, suit in equity, or
16 other proper proceeding for redress. 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

17 The statute plainly requires that there be an actual connection or
18 link between the actions of the Defendants and the deprivation
19 alleged to have been suffered by Plaintiff. *Monell v. Department*
20 *of Social Services*, 436 U.S. 658 (1978); *Rizzo v. Goode*, 423 U.S.
21 362 (1976). The Ninth Circuit has held that "[a] person
22 'subjects' another to the deprivation of a constitutional right,
23 within the meaning of section 1983, if he does an affirmative act,
24 participates in another's affirmative acts or omits to perform an
25 act which he is legally required to do that causes the deprivation
26 of which complaint is made." *Johnson v. Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743
27 (9th Cir. 1978). In order to state a claim for relief under
28 section 1983, plaintiff must link each named defendant with some
affirmative act or omission that demonstrates a violation of
Plaintiff's federal rights.

1 "The Constitution does not mandate comfortable prisons, but
2 neither does it permit inhumane ones" *Farmer v. Brennan*,
3 511 U.S. 825, 832 (1994) (internal quotations and citations
4 omitted). "The treatment a prisoner receives in prison and the
5 conditions under which he is confined are subject to scrutiny
6 under the Eighth Amendment." *Id.* To constitute cruel and unusual
7 punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment, prison conditions
8 must involve "the wanton and unnecessary infliction of pain."
9 *Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981).

10 Prison officials have a duty to take reasonable steps to
11 protect inmates from physical abuse. *Hoptowit v. Ray*, 682 F.2d
12 1237, 1250-51 (9th Cir. 1982); *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 833. To
13 establish a violation of this duty, the prisoner must establish
14 that prison officials were "deliberately indifferent to a serious
15 threat to the inmates's safety." *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 834. The
16 deliberate indifference standard involves an objective and a
17 subjective prong. First, the alleged deprivation must be, in
18 objective terms, "sufficiently serious." *Id.* (citing *Wilson v.*
19 *Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 298 (1991)). Second, the prison official
20 must "know of and disregard an excessive risk to inmate health or
21 safety." *Id.* at 837.

22 A local government unit may not be held responsible for the
23 acts of its employees under a respondeat superior theory of
24 liability. *Monell*, 436 U.S. at 691. Rather, to state a claim for
25 municipal or county liability, a plaintiff must allege that he
26 suffered a constitutional deprivation that was the product of a
27 policy or custom of the local government unit. *City of Canton v.*
28 *Harris*, 489 U.S. 378, 385 (1989).

1 C. Analysis

2 Plaintiff's last remaining claim, for which he currently
3 moves for summary judgment, alleges that Defendant Yakima County
4 subjected him to cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the
5 Eighth Amendment. (Ct. Rec. 73-4 at 11). Specifically, Plaintiff
6 alleges that Defendant Yakima County is liable because the
7 violation of his Eighth Amendment rights resulted from a policy or
8 custom of Yakima County. (Ct. Rec. 73-4 at 11-19).

9 Turning to Defendants' motion, Defendants argue that
10 Plaintiff simply cannot establish that a policy or custom of
11 Defendant Yakima County exists that amounted to deliberate
12 indifference to Plaintiff's safety. (Ct. Rec. 86 at 8-13).
13 Because Plaintiff cannot establish any liability of Defendant
14 Yakima County under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, Defendant Yakima County
15 contends it is entitled to summary judgment on Plaintiff's claim
16 of county liability based on the assaults. (*Id.*)

17 A county may be held liable under a section 1983 claim only
18 when the county inflicts an injury, and it may not be held liable
19 for the acts of its employees under a respondeat superior theory.
20 *Monell*, 436 U.S. at 694; *Gibson v. County of Washoe, Nev.*, 290
21 F.3d 1175, 1185 (9th Cir. 2002); *Davis v. Mason County*, 927 F.2d
22 1473, 1480 (9th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 502 U.S. 899 (1991); *Thompson*
23 *v. City of Los Angeles*, 885 F.2d 1439, 1443 (9th Cir. 1989). At
24 least two avenues may be used to demonstrate a county inflicted
25 constitutional injury. *Gibson*, 290 F.3d at 1185. First, a
26 plaintiff can show that a county itself violated rights or that it
27 directed its employee to do so. *Board of County Comm'rs of Bryan*
28 *County v. Brown*, 520 U.S. 397, 404 (1994); *Gibson*, 290 F.3d at

1 1185. Secondly, in limited situations, a plaintiff can
2 demonstrate that a county is responsible for a constitutional tort
3 committed by its employee although it did not direct the employee
4 to commit the tort. *Brown*, 520 U.S. at 406-407; *Canton*, 489 U.S.
5 at 387; *Gibson*, 290 F.3d at 1185.

6 Under the first avenue, to show that a county violated a
7 plaintiff's rights or instructed its employees to do so, a
8 plaintiff can prove that the county acted with "the state of mind
9 required to prove the underlying violation," just as a plaintiff
10 does when he or she alleges a natural person has violated his
11 federal rights. *Brown*, 520 U.S. at 405. Because liability of a
12 local governmental unit must rest on its actions, not the actions
13 of its employees, a plaintiff must go beyond the respondeat
14 superior theory and demonstrate the alleged constitutional
15 violation was the product of a policy or custom of the local
16 governmental unit. *Pempaur v. City of Cincinnati*, 475 U.S. 469,
17 478-480 (1986). Examples of this direct path to county liability
18 include: (1) a governmental unit's policy to discriminate against
19 pregnant women to violate the Fourteenth Amendment, *Monell*, 436
20 U.S. 658; and (2) a county policy placing aggressive homosexuals
21 in the same jail cell with heterosexuals to violate the
22 heterosexual's Fourteenth Amendment right to personal security,
23 *Redman v. County of San Diego*, 942 F.2d 1435 (9th Cir. 1991) (en
24 banc). Whether a county itself violated a plaintiff's rights or
25 directed its employees to do so is determined by the county's
26 "policy statement, ordinance, regulation, or decision officially
27 adopted and promulgated by that body's officers." *City of St.*
28 *Louis v. Praprotnik*, 485 U.S. 112, 121 (1988) (quoting *Monell*, 436

1 U.S. at 690).

2 Under the second avenue, a plaintiff need not allege the
3 county violated constitutional rights or directed an employee to
4 do so. *Gibson*, 290 F.3d at 1186. A plaintiff can allege that
5 through the county's omissions, it is responsible for a
6 constitutional violation of its employees even though the county's
7 policies were facially constitutional and the county did not
8 direct the employee to take unconstitutional action and lacked the
9 state of mind to prove the underlying violation. *Canton*, 489 U.S.
10 at 387-389. Because a county cannot be held liable under a theory
11 of respondeat superior, a plaintiff must show the county's
12 deliberate indifference led to its omission which caused the
13 employee to commit a constitutional violation. *Canton*, 489 U.S.
14 at 387; *Gibson*, 290 F.3d at 1186. To prove deliberate
15 indifference, the plaintiff must show that the county was on
16 actual or constructive notice that its omission would likely
17 result in a constitutional violation. *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 841.
18 Compared to the first avenue's more direct route to county
19 liability, "much more difficult problems of proof" are presented
20 when a county employee acts under a constitutionally valid policy
21 to violate a plaintiff's rights. *Brown*, 520 U.S. at 406.

22 To impose liability under the second (*Canton*) avenue, a
23 plaintiff must show: (1) a county employee violated plaintiff's
24 rights; (2) the county has customs or policies that amount to
25 deliberate indifference; and (3) the policies were the moving
26 force behind the employee's violation of plaintiff's
27 constitutional rights in the sense that the county could have
28 prevented the violation with an appropriate policy. *Gibson*, 290

1 F.3d at 1193-1194; *Amos v. City of Page*, 257 F.3d 1086, 1094 (9th
2 Cir. 2001).

3 In addressing existence of a policy or custom, the Ninth
4 Circuit Court of Appeals in *Navarro v. Block*, 72 F.3d 712, 714-715
5 (9th Cir. 1995) explained:

6 Proof of random acts or isolated events is insufficient to
7 establish custom. *Thompson v. City of Los Angeles*, 885 F.2d
8 1439, 1444 (9th Cir. 1989). But a plaintiff may prove "the
9 existence of a custom or informal policy with evidence of
10 repeated constitutional violations which were not discharged
11 or reprimanded." *Gillette v. Delmore*, 979 F.2d 1342, 1348
(9th Cir. 1992), cert. denied, ___ U.S. ___, 114 S.Ct. 345
(1993). Once such a showing is made, a municipality may be
liable for its custom "irrespective of whether official
policy-makers had actual knowledge of the practice at issue."
Thompson, 885 F.2d at 1444.

12 The existence of custom for section 1983 liability ensures
13 that counties are held responsible for widespread abuses or
14 practices that cannot be affirmatively attributed to the decisions
15 or ratification of an official policy-maker "but are so pervasive
16 as to have the force of law." *Thompson v. City of Los Angeles*,
17 885 F.2d 1439, 1444 (9th Cir. 1989). A plaintiff "may be able to
18 prove the existence of a widespread practice, that, although not
19 authorized by written law or express [county] policy, is 'so
20 permanent and well settled as to constitute a custom or usage with
21 the force of law.'" *City of St. Louis v. Praprotnik*, 485 U.S.
22 112, 127 (1988) (quoting *Adickes v. S.H. Kress & Co.*, 398 U.S.
23 144, 167-168 (1970)).

24 Here, Plaintiff asserts that Yakima County's policy of
25 keeping inmates separate applied only to an inmate who had been in
26 a fight with another inmate. There were no written policies and
27 procedures mandating "keeping separate" an inmate whom other
28 inmates had labeled a "snitch." The "custom" of which Plaintiff

1 complains is Yakima County's practice of not placing inmates with
2 a "snitch" label on the Keep Separate List, despite knowledge that
3 an inmate who has been labeled a "snitch" is at risk of harm from
4 other inmates. Accordingly, Plaintiff claims that Yakima County's
5 custom or policy was deliberately indifferent to the risk of harm
6 that other inmates posed to an inmate who has been labeled a
7 "snitch."

8 In accord with Yakima County policy, Plaintiff was returned
9 to 4G on March 12, 2003, a cell unit where he had previously been
10 removed due to safety concerns. Plaintiff was assaulted shortly
11 after his return to 4G. Plaintiff alleges that the undisputed
12 facts show that Yakima County policy was the moving force behind
13 the assault and, as a result, constitute a deprivation of his
14 Eighth Amendment right to be free from cruel and unusual
15 punishment.

16 Although Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment mentions a
17 second assault occurring on May 10, 2003, while Plaintiff was
18 housed in the BMU, Plaintiff offers no evidence or argument
19 explaining how this assault may be linked to Yakima County
20 liability. (Ct. Rec. 73). Furthermore, Plaintiff's response to
21 Defendant's motion for summary judgment (Ct. Rec. 92) does not
22 contest Defendant's motion with respect to the May 10, 2003
23 assault, but merely focuses on the March 12, 2003 assault.¹
24 Accordingly, the Court finds the May 10, 2003 assault immaterial
25 to Plaintiff's Eighth Amendment county liability claim.

26
27 ¹Pursuant to Local Rule 56.1(d), the failure to file a
28 statement of specific facts in opposition to a motion for summary
judgment allows the court to assume the facts as claimed by the
moving party exist without controversy.

1 Defendants correctly argue that Plaintiff lacks evidence of
2 repeated constitutional violations or widespread abuses to
3 establish a custom or policy to support a claim against Yakima
4 County. Proof of a single incident of unconstitutional activity
5 does not show a custom or practice. Plaintiff's case fails to
6 show a history of Yakima County policies, customs, or practices
7 for housing reputed snitches that was the moving force of
8 Plaintiff's assault. His assault is the only evidence Plaintiff
9 can offer to establish such a policy or custom. There is no
10 evidence of any history over any period of time that Yakima County
11 inmates have been assaulted for being snitches or that Yakima
12 County has demonstrated deliberate indifference to the risk of
13 harm that other inmates pose to an inmate who has been labeled a
14 "snitch." Because Plaintiff cannot establish any history, outside
15 of his own experience, Plaintiff cannot establish a genuine issue
16 of material fact to prove a "widespread practice," or "practices
17 of sufficient duration, frequency and consistency" that amounted
18 to deliberate indifference by Yakima County to the safety of
19 inmates labeled as snitches. Plaintiff fails to show the policy
20 or custom necessary to demonstrate county liability under Section
21 1983.

22 Moreover, contrary to Plaintiff's contentions, the undisputed
23 facts show that Yakima County was not indifferent to Plaintiff's
24 safety. The undisputed facts in this case show that Yakima County
25 followed a procedure to protect inmates identified by other
26 inmates as snitches. On February 10, 2003, Officer Santucci
27 removed Plaintiff from cell unit 4G when Plaintiff claimed inmates
28 regarded him as a snitch. Officer Santucci took steps to ensure

1 Plaintiff's safety by having him housed in a different unit.
2 Plaintiff was placed in 4G by Officer Little on March 12, 2003,
3 only after Officer Little discussed housing options with Plaintiff
4 and only after Plaintiff told Officer Little he could not be in 4F
5 or 4H but agreed to placement in 4G. These facts do not
6 demonstrate a deliberate indifference to Plaintiff's safety.

7 The Court also finds it significant to note that there has
8 been no evidence presented that Plaintiff was assaulted based on
9 his label as a snitch. There has been no showing that the inmates
10 who previously labeled Plaintiff a snitch were the same inmates
11 who assaulted him nor a showing that those inmates who assaulted
12 Plaintiff regarded him as a "snitch." In addition, in light of
13 the clear record of Plaintiff's difficulties with behavior, it is
14 conceivable that the assault occurred for a reason other than his
15 label as a snitch. Accordingly, the nexus between his label as a
16 snitch and the subsequent assault is less than certain.

17 Nevertheless, to establish county liability, Plaintiff must
18 show he was deprived of his Eighth Amendment rights as a result of
19 Yakima County policy or custom that amounted to deliberate
20 indifference to the safety of inmates labeled as "snitches."
21 Plaintiff has not produced evidence of a custom or policy that was
22 the moving force resulting in Plaintiff's assault. The one-time
23 events with Plaintiff were not the result of well settled customs
24 and thus fail to substantiate a viable claim for county liability.
25 Based on the undisputed facts, the Court finds that Defendants are
26 entitled to summary judgment on Plaintiff's county liability
27 claim.

28 ///

V. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, it is **ORDERED** that:

1. Defendant's motion to strike, filed February 19, 2008, (Ct. Rec. 89) is **DENIED**.

2. Plaintiff's motion for summary judgment (Ct. Rec. 73) is **DENIED**.

3. Defendants' motion for summary judgment (Ct. Rec. 85) is **GRANTED**.

4. Plaintiff's claims against Sheriff Ken Irwin, Plaintiff's claim of deliberate indifference to medical needs, Plaintiff's claims under the Washington State Constitution, and Plaintiff's Eighth Amendment county liability claim are **DISMISSED, with prejudice**, thus concluding this action in its entirety.

IT IS SO ORDERED. The District Court Executive is hereby directed to enter judgment in favor of Defendants and against Plaintiff, file this Order, provide copies to counsel for Plaintiff and Defendants, and **CLOSE** this file.

DATED this 14th day of March, 2008.

S/James P. Hutton

JAMES P. HUTTON
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE